A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, April 6. 1708.

I Have in my laſt given you a Hint from *Edinburgh* of the Matter of Fact, with Reſpect to the Behaviour of the *Preſbyterians* upon this Occaſion of a *French* Invaſion. Now pray, Gentlemen, let me expoſtulate a little with you here upon your barbarous ENGLISH WAY of treating People in the World, damning Nations, Churches, Families and Perſons upon ignorant Conjectures, malicious Suggeſtions, and Party-projected Rumours.

Among your ſelves you may go on, and follow your old Trade, be *True-Born-Engliſh men* to the End of the Chapter, and make your ſelves, as you do, the moſt contemptible People in the World, as to good Nature and good Manners; but while you are dealing with other People, with Nations of diſtinct Original, and however deſpiſed by you, I aſſure you, much better taught in this Reſpect, you ought upon my Word to ſhow more Diſcretion, both with Reſpect to Juſtice, and with Reſpect to your own Characters.

Again are we uniting with theſe People, united with Reſpect to Settlement, and uniting with Reſpect to cultivating and improving that Settlement; and is this your Policy? Is this the Way to convince them of their miſtaken Averſion to us, to ſhow them they ſhall be well us'd, tender'd as Brethren, and valued as our ſelves? Is this your Method to engage them to you, and encourage them to ſtand hard and faſt againſt Invaders and Pretenders? For Shame, let us bluſh as a Nation, and either learn more

more Temper, or leave off calling our ſelves by all the fine Names of Generous, Juſt and Great; to be Honeſt is alone to be Honourable, and to do Juſtice is to be Brave; baſe Actions, whether in Nations or Men, are the Effects of Cowardice and Meanneſs of Soul; a Man of Honour dares not be a Villain; Nations of Honour never fall into general Baſeneſs.

Let us reflect upon the Treaty of Union, by which we were marry'd to this Wife—What Vows did we make, what Proteſtations of Reſpect, what Pretenſions to love her, what Promiſes of good Uſage to her, what Jointures of Commerce and Protection did we offer, while we courted her? And do we uſe her thus the very firſt Year? Ungrateful *England*! Ill-natur'd *England*! what, call your Wife WHORE the firſt Year, nay in the very Honey-Moon of your Wedlock? —And while you cannot charge her with the leaſt ill Behaviour or Immodeſty in her Conduct; this is barbarous indeed, and in ſhort it is not to be juſtify'd, either to our Religious or our Politick Underſtandings.

Why the Man's mad! Will all our Street Railers ſay now—he raves at his own Nation, he is libelling his own Country again, *as an Author lately call'd his* True-Born-Engliſhmen? No, no, Gentlemen, I am not libelling you, but it is you are libelling your ſelves by the horrid Methods you take with your Neighbours; while againſt all Juſtice, Truth, reaſonable Suſpicion, or apparent Probability, you fly upon your new-united Friends with Vollies of unſufferable Slander, and reproach them with joyning themſelves to an Enemy, to whom they have the ſtrongeſt Averſion; an Enemy againſt whom they have on all Occaſions declar'd themſelves, in ſpight of whoſe ancient Invaſions, *tho' aſſiſted by the Tyrannick Power of a Popiſh Queen*, they eſtabliſh'd the Reformation; an Enemy under whom, *take them as the Race pretending to be reſtor'd to govern*, they endured the moſt violent Perſecution, and always reſiſted even to the Death.

The Addreſs from the Principal and Profeſſors of the Colledge of *Edinburgh* gives this a very juſt, tho' a modeſt Remark, being offer'd to the QUEEN upon this Occaſion

It fills us with Amazement, that there ſhould be the leaſt Ground to think, that any of your Subjects that profeſs the Proteſtant Religion, and who enjoy a profound Peace under your Majeſty's mild Adminiſtration, ſhould either have encourag'd ſuch a miſchievous Deſign, or wiſh its Succeſs, which would deprive us of the Beſt of Sovereigns, and which hath a plain Tendency to enſlave your Dominions, ruin the Proteſtant Intereſt, and fill Europe *with all the Miſeries that would attend the Arbitrary and Tyrannical Power of the declared Enemy of her Liberties.*

Indeed it may well fill us with Amazement, *that there ſhould be any Ground to think, &c.* But really it fills all honeſt Men with Amazement, that People ſhould think thus without Ground, that we ſhould cenſure the poor People as Rebels, and as courting a *French* Invaſion, without the leaſt Ground—This is the Slander I am ſpeaking of, which we ought to be aſham'd of, and to diſown our very Names for being drawn into.

To deſcend now to the Caſe more particularly; I think, I need not go about to prove, that theſe honeſt People have not countenanc'd the Enemy, that they have no hand in the Deſign, nor the leaſt Inclination to favour it—Their Readineſs to offer themſelves to the Expence of their Blood in oppoſing it, is a moſt convincing Proof of that Part, and their Behaviour in ſetling Meaſures for their effecting thoſe Reſolutions put it out of all Queſtion, and even their very Enemies begin now to acknowledge.

But I muſt pretend to tell you this is not all, but there really never was the leaſt ſufficient Ground to ſuſpect them; and this will lead me to examine ſome Caſes, and make ſome Paralells.

Firſt, I am to examine the Uneaſineſſes of theſe People about the Union, from whence all this Clamour has been pretended to be raiſed—Secondly, Their Scruples of the Abjuration-Oath—which coming juſt at ſuch a Juncture as this, has been improv'd to corroborate our Suſpicions, and as it were to fix the Scandal upon them; and a true Stating theſe, will effectually clear up the Reputation of this honeſt People, and by Conſequence leave us all under *Solomons* Cenſure, *for judging a Matter before we heard it.*

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If any object my Plainness in this Case, and tell me I am too hard upon my own Country, and that if it is an Error, an *Englishman* ought not to tell it; or if they please to threaten me, as I have been often serv'd, when I take the freedom with you, to tell you your own; my Answer is very short.

The Vindication of an injur'd People, now part of our Selves, the Debt due to them, and Truth in the true stating this Matter; the putting a stop to a Practice so Dishonourable and Unnatural, are things far more necessary than concealing your Mistakes, which only assists you in continuing in them———As to your Anger, it has never been my way to fear the Displeasure either of Person or Nation, when I am to publish NEEDFUL TRUTH— That it is True, and that is Necessary, are the two only Qualifications I think my self oblig'd to regard; and here I am satisfi'd in both: if therefore you will hear no more of your ill-treatment of innocent Neighbours, you have an excellent way to prevent it and silence every Accusation, (*viz.*) REFORM IT.

And now let us see into the mighty Foundation, upon which this black building of Reproach has been erected; and what have been the Pretences from which the *Presbyterians* in *Scotland*, have been charged with a Design to joyn with the Pretender?—And really this will be a new Satyr upon *Englishmen*, and blacken the very History of these Times to Posterity when they shall see how partially we judge, how unjustly censure, and how rashly we condemn.

Let us put the Objection in the roughest Terms we can; for really Gentlemen, I'll do you all the Justice I can, tho' it is but a dirty Business, and at best will leave you with sooty Consciences and down Looks.

Why, these People were professedly against the UNION, their common People rabbled against it, their Representatives on all occasions protested against it; their Advocates Printed against it, their Ministers preach'd and pray'd against it, and upon all occasions they have rail'd at it, shewn themselves uneasie at it, and declared themselves willing to have it dissolved again.

Now all this may be allow'd to be true, and much more if it were required; and yet the Consequence drawn from these Premises, is the most unjust, the most barbarous, and most horrid way of using the *Scots* that can possibly be imagin'd— To make this appear, a short distinction may be made, which would clear it up all, and I dare say, you will allow it necessary to make such a Distinction.

We ought to distinguish of *the Reasons why*, and *Grounds from whence* the Aversions of these People did flow, and when you will please to compare them with *the Reasons* and *Grounds* of other Parties both there and here, the Mask will be taken off from our Censures, and we shall perhaps find, that the first Rise of this unjust Charge was taken from a Party, who really espousing the Interest of this Foreign Pretender, formed this Accusation to divide us, to render suspected to us, the Body of Men best qualified in the World to suppress the Invasion, and so weaken the Hands of the Government in opposing it: To clear up this, let me enter into the several Dissatisfactions of Parties with respect to the UNION.

1. The Presbyterians who were averse to, and declared against the Union, were so from their Apprehensions of their being Subjected by it, to the Suffrage of the *English* Clergy in the Parliament, and their Mistakes about it being in the Power of a *British* Parliament, to alter the *Postulata* made for the Security of the *Kirk*— By which Episcopacy might in Time be restor'd in *Scotland*, and the *Kirk* be sent a begging for the Grace of Toleration.
2. Others found themselves uneasie upon the Account of the Obligation of the National Covenant, by which they being firmly bound by Oath against the establishing Episcopacy, and the Union, obliging *Scotland* to joyn in the Establishment and Security of the Church of *England* which is Episcopal, they deemd it impossible to joyn with

England

England in this Union, without incurring the Guilt of National Perjury.

I defie the Malice of Men to argue, that either of these Reasons against the Union can inferr, that these People should incline to favour a *French* Invasion; for if these fears for their Church, created their Aversions against Uniting, the Approach of a *French* Power could not but fill them with the same Aversions in a stronger Degree, and carried with them the very Evils in reality, which they had the Prospect of the other way, only in Imagination. For Example,

Would their Church be in Danger by the Union, of being subjected to Episcopal Authority, would their Covenant be broken, and the Guilt of National Perjury be incurr'd by the Treaty of Union with *England*, because it gives way, or seems to consent to Establishing a Protestant Prelacy, they must be allow'd to be in much more Danger, and the Perjury be much more certain and aggravated by a subjection to *Popish* Prelacy and *French* Tyranny. Certainly I need not run this Parallel on, to shew how every way the Mischief would be superiour, and the Destruction surer; and how perfectly destitute of all Human Policy, as well as Religious Caution, if they that on meer Principles of National Safety and Religious Obligation opposed one, should in defiance of both embrace the other.

This is a convincing Proof, that the suggestion of the *Presbyterian* Party in *Scotland*, closing with a *French* Invasion, is not only Malicious and Barbarous in Us, unbecoming the respect we have pretended to have for *Scotland*, and unbecoming the Temper of Christians, but absurd in its own Nature, contrary to Sence and right Reasoning, and is the meer Artifice of a Party, that would have it be as they suggest it to be, and whose End it too much answers, to have other People believe it, whether it be true or no.

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